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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/47/719)]

47/189. Convening of a global conference on the sustainable development of small island developing States

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989, in which it decided to convene the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to, inter alia, elaborate strategies and measures aimed at promoting sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries,

Recalling also its resolution 45/202 of 21 December 1990, in which it called upon island developing countries to continue to adopt suitable development policies designed to overcome their specific vulnerabilities and to adopt measures aimed at protecting and rehabilitating their fragile ecosystems, and at the same time appealed to the international community to extend cooperation in this regard,

Taking note of Agenda 21, 1/ adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in particular chapter 17, section G thereof, on the sustainable development of small island developing States,

Taking into account relevant work in this area carried out by other organs, programmes and organizations of the United Nations system,

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1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

Recognizing that small island developing States and islands supporting small communities are a special case with regard to both environment and development, that they are ecologically fragile and vulnerable, that their small size, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets place them at a disadvantage economically and limit economies of scale, and that for small island developing States the ocean and coastal environment is of strategic importance and constitutes a valuable development resource,

Also recognizing that the geographic isolation of small island developing States has resulted in their habitation by comparatively large numbers of unique species of flora and fauna, giving them a very large share of global biodiversity,

Aware that small island developing States have rich and diverse cultures with special adaptations to island environments and knowledge of sound management of island resources,

Aware also that small island developing States have all the environmental problems and challenges of the coastal zone concentrated in a limited land area,

Noting that small island developing States are considered extremely vulnerable to the impact of potential climate change and sea-level rise, with certain small low-lying island developing States facing the increasing threat of the loss of their entire national territories,

Gravely concerned that most tropical islands are currently experiencing the more immediate impacts of an increasing frequency of cyclones, storms and hurricanes associated with climate change, which are causing major set-backs to their socio-economic development,

Stressing that, because the development options of small island developing States are limited, there are special challenges to planning for and implementing sustainable development, and that small island developing States will be constrained in meeting those challenges without the cooperation and assistance of the international community,

Affirming the relevance of the environmental issues identified in paragraph 12, section I, of its resolution 44/228 to the sustainable development of small island developing States,

Reaffirming the recommendation in Agenda 21 that small island developing States, with the support, as appropriate, of international organizations, whether subregional, regional or global, should develop and strengthen inter-island, regional and interregional cooperation and information exchange, including periodic regional and global meetings on the sustainable development of such States, 2/

2/ Ibid., chap. 17, para. 17.130.

1. Decides to convene in April 1994 the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which shall be of two weeks' duration and shall have the highest possible level of participation;

2. Accepts with deep appreciation the generous offer of the Government of Barbados to host the Conference;

3. Affirms that the Conference should elaborate strategies and measures to enhance the sustainable development of small island developing States in the context of increased national and international efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development worldwide;

4. Decides that the Conference shall have the following objectives:

(a) To adopt plans and programmes to support the sustainable development of small island developing States and the utilization of their marine and coastal resources, which includes meeting essential human needs, maintaining biodiversity and improving the quality of life for island people;

(b) To adopt measures that will enable small island developing States to cope effectively and creatively and in a sustainable manner with environmental changes and to mitigate the impacts on and reduce the threats posed to marine and coastal resources;

5. Also decides that the Conference, in pursuit of those objectives, shall examine strategies for national and international action with a view to arriving at specific agreements and commitments by Governments and by intergovernmental organizations for defined activities to promote sustained and environmentally sound development of small island developing States; the Conference shall, inter alia:

(a) Review current trends in the socio-economic development of small island developing States and the prospects, constraints and further options for their sustainable development, taking into consideration the relevant programmes and recommendations in chapter 17, section G, of Agenda 21; 1/

(b) Examine the nature and magnitude of the specific vulnerabilities of small island developing States with a view to defining and/or formulating specific indicators of vulnerability in a way that has operational applicability;

(c) Define a number of specific actions and policies relating to environmental and development planning to be undertaken by small island developing States, with the assistance of the international community, to facilitate the sustainable development of such States;

(d) Identify the elements that small island developing States need to include in their medium- and long-term sustainable development plans, including their response strategies, taking into account the importance of integrating environmental, social and economic factors in the maintenance of cultural and biological diversity and the conservation of endangered species and critical habitats on both land and sea;

(e) Recommend measures for enhancing the endogenous capacity of small island developing States, in particular the development of human resources and the promotion of access to environmentally sound technology for sustainable development within such States;

(f) Review whether institutional arrangements at the international level enable small island developing States to give effect to the relevant provisions of Agenda 21, and make recommendations as needed in this regard;

6. Requests the Secretary-General of the United Nations to prepare a report for the substantive session of the Preparatory Committee established in paragraph 8 of the present resolution, containing a review of existing global and regional programmes of action with regard to their applicability to and their combined effect on the sustainable development of small island developing States, with specific recommendations on any changes to those programmes of action which may be needed to establish greater consistency with the principles of Agenda 21 with respect to the sustainable development of small island developing States;

7. Also requests the Secretary-General to invite to the Conference those listed in paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 46/168 of 19 December 1991, as well as representatives of relevant regional and subregional organizations;

8. Decides to establish the Preparatory Committee for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which shall be open to all the participants referred to in paragraph 7 of the present resolution, in accordance with the established practice of the Assembly;

9. Welcomes the candidature of Ambassador Penny Wensley (Australia) for the chairmanship of the Preparatory Committee;

10. Decides that the Preparatory Committee shall hold a two-day organizational session at United Nations Headquarters, not later than April 1993, for the following purposes:

(a) The election of its chairman and the other officers, namely, four vice-chairmen, including a rapporteur, giving due regard to equitable geographical representation;

(b) The organization of its work;

11. Also decides that the Preparatory Committee shall hold a substantive session of two weeks' duration in August 1993 at United Nations Headquarters, at which time it shall:

(a) Draft the provisional agenda for the Conference, in accordance with the provisions of the present resolution, on the basis of recommendations to be submitted by the Secretary-General;

(b) Receive and consider the substantive contributions referred to in paragraphs 6, 16 and 17 of the present resolution;

(c) Prepare draft decisions to be submitted to the Conference for consideration and adoption;

12. Further decides that the host country of the Conference shall be ex officio an officer of the Preparatory Committee;

13. Requests the Secretary-General, within the context of the administrative arrangements to be put in place to coordinate the implementation of Agenda 21 and the servicing of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and in close cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, to establish a focal point with a senior official, at an appropriate level and with the necessary specialized expertise, to service fully the preparations for and holding of the Conference and to ensure such follow-up action as may result therefrom;

14. Also requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report, to be submitted to the Preparatory Committee at its organizational session, containing recommendations on an adequate preparatory process, taking into account the provisions of the present resolution and the views expressed by Governments during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

15. Further requests the Secretary-General to prepare draft rules of procedure for the consideration of the Preparatory Committee at its organizational session, and, in this context, to include proposals for the participation of representatives of associate members of the regional commissions, outside the negotiating process, and, in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, to allow them to contribute to the Conference and its preparatory process;

16. Stresses the importance of holding regional technical meetings on the sustainable development of small island developing States as a means of preparing substantive contributions to the Conference, and invites relevant regional and subregional bodies, in close cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other agencies, organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, to organize such meetings as soon as practicable, preferably in the first half of 1993;

17. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure the coordination of contributions from the United Nations system through the Administrative Committee on Coordination;

18. Invites relevant non-governmental organizations from developed and developing countries, in particular those from small island developing States, including those related to major groups, to contribute to the Conference, within the areas of their competence and expertise, on the basis of the procedures for their accreditation followed for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, as recommended in paragraph 38.44 of Agenda 21; 1/

19. Decides that, subject to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 40/243 of 18 December 1985, 41/213 of 19 December 1986 and 42/211 of 21 December 1987, the funds necessary for the preparatory process and the Conference itself should be made available within the programme budget without adversely affecting other ongoing activities and without prejudice to the provision of extrabudgetary resources;

20. Also decides to establish a voluntary fund for the purpose of assisting small island developing States and the least developed countries to participate fully and effectively in the Conference and its preparatory process, and invites Governments to contribute to the fund;

21. Requests the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of the relevant specialized agencies and other relevant organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system;

22. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session a sub-item entitled "Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" under an agenda item entitled "Implementation of decisions and recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development".

93rd plenary meeting
22 December 1992